

SOVIET EMISSARIES SAID TO MENTION RESUMED TIES WITH USSR

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(TEXT) IN THE SECRET TALKS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE DEFENSE MINISTER ABOUT 2 WEEKS AGO, THE SOVIET EMISSARIES RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF THE RESUMPTION ISRAELI SOVIET RELATIONS EVEN BEFORE AN OVERALL OR ANY OTHER AGREEMENT IS REACHED IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

INSTEAD OF THE FORMULA OF THE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS AFTER A SETTLEMENT, WHICH WAS THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF MOSCOW, THE SOVIET EMISSARIES USED THE FORMULA OF RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WHEN IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT THERE IS SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. IT WAS UNDERSTOOD FROM THE EMISSARIES THAT IN MOSCOW'S OPINION SUCH PROGRESS IS NOT LINKED TO ANY FRAMEWORK, AND IT CAN TAKE PLACE IN GENEVA OR BEFORE IT THROUGH CONTACTS, SIMILAR TO THOSE HELD ABOUT 2 WEEKS AGO.

JERUSALEM TAKES A CAUTIOUS VIEW OF THE EMISSARIES' STATEMENTS. AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN ISRAELI-SOVIET RELATIONS SINCE THE 6-DAY WAR, THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE FEAR THAT ANY MODERATION IN THE SOVIET POSITIONS WAS DESIGNED TO SERVE AS A TEMPTATION TO ISRAEL TO SOFTEN ITS POSITIONS REGARDING AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT IN THE REGION. NEVERTHELESS, THE VERY FACT THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD IS BEING VIEWED FAVORABLY, AND THE PREVAILING OPINION IS THAT THEY SHOULD BE CONTINUED, AS HAS, INDEED, ALREADY BEEN AGREED WITH THE EMISSARIES.

IT IS NOT CLEAR IN JERUSALEM WHAT THE SOVIETS MEAN WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT THE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS. ONE POSSIBILITY IS, OF COURSE, THAT MOSCOW MEANS THE RESUMPTION OF FULL RELATIONS WITHOUT RESERVATIONS. HOWEVER, OBSERVERS WHO FOLLOW SOVIET POLICY DO NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY, ON THE BASIS OF PRECEDENTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THAT INITIALLY THE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WILL BE EXPRESSED BY THE EXCHANGE OF MISSIONS, APPARENTLY TRADE MISSIONS OR CULTURAL MISSIONS.

AT ANY RATE, IT IS AGREED IN JERUSALEM THAT THE QUESTION OF THE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS IN WHATEVER FORM IS STILL AT THE INITIAL STAGE, AND THE PROSPECT OF THE SUCCESS OF THE CONTACTS ON THIS MATTER ARE ESTIMATED AT FIFTY-FIFTY.

MEANWHILE, IT HAS BECOME DEFINITELY CLEAR THAT THE SOVIET EMISSARIES WERE OF TOP-LEVEL, BOTH FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THEIR POSITION AND THE POWERS GIVEN THEM BY THE KREMLIN LEADERS. THE REPORTS ABOUT A LINK BETWEEN THESE EMISSARIES AND A PARTY DELEGATION WHICH CAME AT THE INVITATION OF RAKAH ARE ABSOLUTELY UNFOUNDED. THE EMISSARIES CAME TO ISRAEL ON A CLEAR-CUT GOVERNMENTAL MISSION, AND FOR THE DEFINITE PURPOSE OF HOLDING TALKS WITH THE HEADS OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. AFTER COMPLETING THESE TALKS, THE EMISSARIES LEFT ISRAEL IMMEDIATELY AND DID NOT MEET WITH ANY OTHER PERSONALITY.

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